



City of Westminster

NEWS AND NOTES



LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Dear Residents:

The City of Westminster, with the assistance of the Carroll County Health Department, is preparing for the possibility of a pandemic outbreak of the H1N1 virus, formerly referred to as

swine flu, in the next several months. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that as much as 30% of the general population could be affected. This would represent more than 50,000 residents here in Carroll County.

The incubation period (the timeframe between acquiring the infection and becoming ill) for influenza averages just 2 days. People who become ill may begin transmitting infection to others one-half to one day prior to becoming ill. Transmission of the infection is greatest in the first two days of illness, and children have been found to transmit the infection most easily.

Influenza infection rates are typically highest among school-aged children and risk of illness generally declines with age. The severity of influenza is likely to be highest in young, middle-aged persons, as well as those with serious pre-existing medical conditions. Approximately 50% of those who become ill will seek outpatient medical care. The influenza outbreak could last 6 to 8 weeks, with at least two waves of the disease likely.

Depending on the severity of the outbreak, it is possible that City services will have to be curtailed or postponed. For example, it may be necessary to close the Family Center for a period of time and cancel fitness training sessions to help eliminate the spread of the flu. Board and Commission meetings may be postponed or cancelled and offices may be closed to the public.

We are developing a plan to cope with these possible outcomes and to ensure the health and

safety of both our City employees and the general public. Up to date information on City services can be obtained by calling 410-848-9000 or by visiting our web page at www.westminstermd.gov.

To assist you in planning your own personal strategy for dealing with a pandemic outbreak, we have identified actions and activities you can take in your own home to prevent this disease. These procedures are found on page 2.

At the same time the City is preparing for a possible influenza outbreak, we are also preparing for a reduction in revenues as a result of the State's worsening budget picture. Based on current information, the City could see a 6% reduction in State Aid to Police and Highway User Revenues in the current fiscal year.

The Highway User Revenue, which is mainly funded from gasoline taxes, car titling fees, and driver licensing, were reduced from a budgeted \$747,850 to \$74,850. The Police Aid funding dropped from a budgeted \$400,000 to \$254,826.

To accommodate these budget cuts, a hiring freeze has been imposed and no vacant positions will be filled, no programs or projects beyond those already funded will be implemented, and capital projects and equipment purchases have been cancelled.

One way that you can keep abreast of City information, news, and activities is to visit our website (www.westminstermd.gov). This site was just updated in July and hosts a variety of information, not only about the City government but also about our partners, businesses, and volunteer organizations. Please visit the site on a regular basis to keep current with City happenings.

Kevin Utz

Mayor

Helpful Tips for Minimizing Potential Flu Infection

Prior to a pandemic influenza emergency, it is important that all citizens plan for and employ effective strategies to minimize their potential for infection and minimize the impact on their families. These strategies should include the following:

1. Obtaining annual flu vaccinations for all family members.
2. Frequently washing hands and using hand sanitizers.
3. Employing proper respiratory “etiquette”:
 - Covering coughs and sneezes
 - Frequent cleaning of surfaces such as telephone receivers, doorknobs, public counters, etc.
4. Strict adherence to guidance provided by public health officials.
5. Employing “Social Distancing” strategies. The strategies are intended to reduce the spread of infection and they include:
 - Staying away from people who appear to be ill.
 - Avoiding crowds and public events.
 - Staying at home when possible.
 - Canceling public events.
 - Closing schools.
6. “Self-Quarantine” — Elements of self-quarantine include the following:
 - Keep your family at home and away from people who may be infectious.
 - Be prepared for a period of time where customary services are not available to the public due to the spread of the flu. Those preparations should include keeping a 3 to 5 day supply of food on-hand, as well as one-gallon of water per day per family member.
 - Have a family “Go Kit” available in case there is a need to relocate. This “Go Kit” should contain basic necessities to include:
 - ✓ 3 to 5 day supply of food and water.
 - ✓ Flashlight and batteries.
 - ✓ Change of clothing.
 - ✓ Prescription medications for one week.
 - ✓ List of physician and important medical information.
 - ✓ Cell phone and charger.
 - ✓ Identifications, credit cards, and cash.
 - ✓ Battery-powered radio and batteries.
 - Be prepared to care for ill family members at home. This includes keeping a supply of basic medical supplies in your home and knowing how to isolate sick people in home away from other family members (i.e. separate bedrooms and bathrooms).

Keeping these tips in mind will help minimize the potential for and the spread of infection.

Westminster Tree Commission

The purpose of the Westminster Tree Commission is to develop and help implement a tree program that ensures the proper care and treatment of trees and shrubs within public spaces of the City. Also, the Commission provides expertise to City staff and the public regarding best management practices for tree care and management.

A committee was formed in 1983 for inventory and then the Tree Commission was established in 1988. The members are appointed to three year terms by the Mayor and Common Council.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Term Expiration</u>
Joe Barley- chair	05/10
Neil Ridgely	02/12
Steve Allgeier	12/10
Richard Wilbur	10/11
Jay Bogash	05/10
Roland Backhaus	04/10

City Staff: Eric Schlitzer (City Arborist), Tim Rogers (City Planner). Meetings are scheduled as needed, and at least one per quarter is necessary. Contact: Tim Rogers trogers@westgov.com or 410-848-4628.

In a community like Westminster, in the middle of rural Carroll County, it is easy to overlook the need for trees in urban settings. It seems we are surrounded by nothing but rolling farmland and forests, so why be concerned about trees and green areas in the City? This entire newsletter could easily be dedicated to discussing the environmental benefits of urban trees, including storm water filtration and air quality benefits and a few pages can be devoted to discussing how properly placed trees can reduce heating and cooling costs in homes and businesses. An additional page can be used to discuss pavement cooling and traffic calming. Then, we can end with an exhausting list of facts regarding increased property values, revenue for businesses, the reduced carbon footprint, and increased sense of community. While these are all per-

fectly reasonable justifications for the value of urban trees, why not keep it simple. Observe the two pictures below and decide on which town you would rather live in:



Tree City USA

Celebrating 20 Years as a "Tree City USA"! Westminster is in elite company when it comes to showing dedication to urban trees! Since 1988, Westminster has been designated a *Tree City USA* by the Arbor Day Foundation each year. Of the 157 municipalities in Maryland, only 37 are currently designated, and only eight have been designated longer than Westminster (see <http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/map.cfm> for a complete listing). Even more impressive is that in 2001 Westminster became the second city in the state to receive the "Sterling Award" for ten consecutive years of urban tree program growth.

Tree City USA continued from page 3

To be a *Tree City USA*, a city has to demonstrate its commitment to urban trees through policy, budget, and outreach initiatives. In Westminster, the Tree Commission oversees these activities to ensure continued recertification. Recent outreach projects include:

- Helping neighbors plant 20 new street trees along West George Street
- Planting three new trees at Belle Grove Square park and replacing diseased trees
- Helping students plant trees at East and West Middle Schools; and William Winchester, Westminster, and Friendship Valley Elementary schools
- Organizing the Annual Community Forestry Workshop for area tree care professionals

To display our pride in being designated, there is a Tree City USA flag flying at City Hall, a wall full of plaques inside City Hall, and a street sign at every entrance to downtown. Feel free to contact the City if you would like to know more.

What Lies Ahead for the Tree Commission?

At the end of each year, the Commission meets with City staff to discuss accomplishments from the previous year and program activities for the coming year. To wrap up 2009, the Commission will be sponsoring the 17th Annual Community Forestry Workshop. Held at McDaniel College on October 8th, this event offers affordable training for area tree care industry professionals. The program this year consists of sessions on safety, pruning, disease identification, proper planting techniques, and hazard tree identification.

At the end of March 2010, the Tree Commission will conduct Arbor Week activities. This is when the commission does most of its outreach, and will normally conduct a planting at a local school. Since next year's activities have not yet been planned, contact the



Commission if you have an idea for a planting and/or outreach project.

Also in 2010, the Commission and City staff will be preparing for and starting a Public Space Tree Inventory project.

The current inventory has not been updated in nearly fifteen years. This updated inventory will provide

the data needed for a more efficient management program, and will likely take a year or two to complete.

If you have a suggestion or concern regarding trees in your neighborhood, or would like to learn more about the Tree Commission and the City's street tree program, contact the Department of Planning at 410-848-9000 or the City Arborist's office at 410-848-9077, or visit us on the web at: www.westminstermd.gov/citygov/citygov_tree.htm.

For more information and some helpful tips on trees, visit the following web sites:

www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/programs/urban
www.arborday.org
www.fs.fed.us/ucf
www.treelink.org
www.naturewithin.info



City Arborist Eric Schlitzer, and Tree Commissioners Jay Bogash and Steve Allgeier install a street tree on West George Street.



Westminster Recreation and Parks Events October to November

Wednesday, October 14: 7-9:30pm Mother/Son Date and Wednesday, October 21: 7-9:30pm Daddy/Daughter Date.

Moms bring your sons and dads bring your daughters out for an evening of dinner, dancing, games, and great gifts and prizes! The events are held at Martin's Westminster from 7 to 9:30pm. Tickets are \$60.00 per couple and **MUST BE PRE-PAID**. Boys and Girls must be in K-8th grades.



These are special, themed dances which center on the family. Formal dress is encouraged but not required. Adult meals can be substituted for children's meals at an additional \$10.00 per ticket. Tickets are non-refundable. Tables can be reserved if your group consists of five couples. A couple is considered one adult and one child, no exceptions. For more information and menu options please call the Recreation Department at 410-857-9072. Tickets are on sale now! Space is limited.

Tuesday, October 27th: 6 pm. Halloween Parade in Historic Downtown Westminster begins with registration on Monroe St. near Dutterer's Park. The parade begins at 7pm via Pennsylvania Avenue to Main Street and ends on Longwell Avenue. This event is coordinated by the American Legion Post #31. Call 410-857-7953 for more information.

Saturday, October 31, 2009 5th Annual (Halloween) Open Bench Press Competition

The Westminster Family Fitness Center and GNC will sponsor their 5th Annual Open Bench Press Competition at the Family Center. Powerlifters from the tri-state area compete for trophies. Proceeds benefit Access Carroll. If interested, call 410-751-5501 for details.



Wednesday, November 11: 4 pm Veterans Day Ceremony remembers our fallen soldiers at the Westminster Armory (11 Longwell Avenue). The service is open to the public. For more information call American Legion Post #31 at 410-857-7593 or 410-876-0746

Monday to Wednesday, November 23-25: Fall Holiday Camp is offered for 6-10 year-old children over the holiday break. Crafts, games, sports, and snacks are provided. Camp will be held on the Monday to Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving. Registration can be for one day or all three. Cost is \$20 per day, per child with an additional \$5 per day, per child fee for before care (7-9am) and after care (4-6pm). Participants need to bring a bagged lunch and a drink. Snacks are provided. Dress your child for play and fun - we suggest old clothes. Call 410-848-9161 for more information.

Saturday, November 28: Holiday Parade, Tree Lighting, and Santa.

FREE! Join the Holiday season on Main Street in Westminster! The Parade begins the event with a variety of floats starting at 6 pm. Then on Locust Lane enjoy the seasonal sounds of the Westminster Municipal Band, caroling, the awarding of the Mayors Cup, and await the arrival of Santa before the Lighting of the Christmas Tree. Holiday baked goods are available for sale with a free cup of hot chocolate. The Old Armory on Longwell offers a **Santa's Treat Event** with crafts, games, face painting, carnival rides, door prizes, and Santa! For times and more information call 410-848-9072.



Need a space to have your next party???

Consider having your next scrapbooking party, business meeting, baby shower, or birthday party at the Community Building located at 325 Royer Road. This facility is equipped with a kitchenette that includes a refrigerator, microwave oven, stovetop, sink, plenty of cabinet space, and a spacious, heated bathroom. The foyer contains a large coat rack along with shelving for storage. This area accommodates 50 people comfortably with tables and chairs provided. Please contact the Recreation and Parks Office at 410-848-9161 to check availability. *Booking now for January 2010!*



Carroll Arts Center October through November



Saturday, October 3: 8 pm "April Verch" is presented by Common Ground on the Hill. She is a Canadian fiddler-singer-dancer whose depth of repertoire ranges from bluegrass to Brazilian to Celtic, from a jaunty Canadian folk-song to a poignant contemporary ballad. Verch is a world-class fiddler, a champion Ottawa Valley stepdancer, an acclaimed composer, and a vocalist whose voice has been hailed as "absolutely captivating" by the Toronto Star. Tickets are \$19/\$17.

October 8 through November 20: *Four Visions in a Different Light*. The photographic works in this spellbinding exhibit have been created using infrared photography. The artists use alternative processes, digital collage, printmaking, painting, and non-silver techniques. Featuring Susan Ruddick Bloom, Westminster, Theresa Airey, Monkton, Jill Enfield, NYC, and Elizabeth Opalenik, Oakland, CA.

October 8 through November 20: *Art with a Bite*. Dentists work for years mastering the art of creating a perfect smile, but many of them are talented in other art forms as well. This exhibit features paintings and photographs by several local dentists including Lawrence Eden, Edward Goldman, William Jennette, Rudolph Kilma, Robert Scott, Arnold Sindler, and Gerald Title. It's sure to put a smile on your face too!

Friday, October 9: 8 pm FLICC presents "*Lars and the Real Girl*," 2007; Rated PG-13; 106 minutes. Lars is a painfully introverted and lonely guy. His family is excited to hear that he has a new female friend, but then fear for his sanity when they realize he has bought a "Real Girl" blow-up doll that he fully believes is real. A delightful story about family relationships. Tickets are \$6/\$8.

Saturday October 31: 2pm "*The Wizard of Oz*," 1939; Rated G; 101 minutes. This film will be presented for FREE to members only! Follow the Yellow Brick Road to everyone's favorite film. Costume contest, sing-a-longs, and treats for the munchkins!

Saturday October 31: 6pm until midnight A Night of Mystery Science Theater 3000! Tickets are \$5 each or \$10 for all three films! MST3K, as it is known to its legions of cultish fans, originally aired on Comedy Central and the Sci-Fi Channel. It lambastes horror movies with a constant barrage of jokes, wise cracks, and pop culture references. They've riffed and raged on nearly 200 of the world's worst movies, and we've selected three MST3K film favorites that truly put the "horror" in Halloween! "*Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*" will be at **6pm**, "*Teenagers from Outer Space*" at **8pm**, and "*Manos the Hands of Fate*" will close the series at **10 pm**.

Saturday, November 7: 8 pm. Russ Barenberg, presented by Common Ground on the Hill, is a Grammy-nominated acoustic guitarist and composer who creates "exquisitely original" music that joyously integrates bluegrass, jazz, and American/Celtic fiddle and dance traditions. Long at the creative forefront of the acoustic music scene, Russ has collaborated with many of its finest artists, including Jerry Douglas, Edgar Meyer, Bela Fleck, Alison Krauss, and, most recently, legendary jazz bassist, Charlie Haden. Tickets are \$19/\$17.

Friday, November 13, 7 pm; Saturday November 14, 3 and 7 pm; Sunday, November 15, 3 pm "*Romeo and Harriet*" displays the talents of more than 50 teens in this musical spoof of "*Romeo & Juliet*," set in modern day New York City. It features the clerks of the swanky Montague's Department Store and the second-rate Capulet's Discount Mart. Romeo and Harriet, the heirs to these two retail empires, fall in love, just as Shakespeare's characters did, but this musical has a happy ending! There's laughter galore as the quarrelling chorus members trade insults filled with comic wit. The production is a partnership between Carroll County Arts Council and Maryland Ensemble Theatre.

Friday, November 20: 8 pm, FLICC presents "*Diner*," 1982; Rated R; 110 minutes. This film is a nostalgic look at the 1950s through the eyes of a group of young men hanging out at their favorite Baltimore diner. Bring a canned food item for Carroll Food Sunday and get a free bag of popcorn. Sponsored by PFG Foods.